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MYLES

BY PADRAIC COLUM

You blew in
Where Jillin Brady kept up state on nothing,
Married her daughter, and brought to Jillin's house
A leash of dogs, a run of ferrets, a kite
In a wired box; linnets and larks and goldfinches
In their proper cages, and you brought with you the song—

If you come to look for me
Perhaps you'll not me find,
For I'll not in my Castle be—
Enquire where horns wind.

You used to say
Five hounds' lives were a man's life, and when Teague
Had died of old age, and when Fury that was a pup
When Teague was maundering, had turned from hill to hearth,
And lay in the dimness of a hound's old age,
I went with you again, and you were upright
As the circus-rider standing on his horse,
Quick as a goat that will take any path, and lean—
Lean as a lash. You would have no speech
With wife or child or mother-in-law till you
Were out of doors and standing on the ditch
Ready to face the river or the hill—

If you come to look for me
Perhaps you'll not me find,
For I'll not in my Castle be—
Enquire where horns wind.

Before I had a man-at-arms
I had an eager hound:
Then was I known as Reynardine
In no crib to be found.

I can see you now
 Under the doorway-lintel of the house
 That once was Jillin Brady's, now is yours:
 The hounds are cringing; but they hear your voice
 And straighten up: they know the words you sing—

The hen-wife's son once heard the grouse
 Talk to his soft-voiced mate,
 And what he heard the heath-poult say
 The loon would not relate.

Impatient in the yard he grew
 And patient on the hill:
 Of cocks and hens he'd keep no chargē,
 And he went with Reynardine.

I can remember
 Lean days when we were idle as the birds
 That will not preen their feathers, but will travel
 To taste a berry or pull a shred of wool
 That they will never use. We pass the bounds:
 A forest's grave, the black bog, is before us,
 And in its very middle you will show me
 The snipe's nest that is lonelier than the snipe
 That's all that's there; and then a stony hill;
 A red fox climbing, pausing, looking round his tail
 At us travailing against wind and rain
 To reach the river-spring where Finn or Fergus
 Hardened a spear, back of a thousand years.

And still your cronies are what they were then—
 The hounds that know the hill and know the hearth;
 And still your poets are the blackbirds singing
 When kites are leaving, crows are going home,
 And the thrush in the morning like a spectre showing
 Beside the day-spring; your visitors I know:
 The cuckoo that will swing upon a branch,
 The cornerake with quick head between the grass-tufts.
 I see and hear you, and should lightning make
 Its momentary writing in your sky,
 Remember by that token me who tried
 To make the epic about Reynardine,
 So seldom in his Hall. *Before he had*
A man-at-arms, an eager hound was his.

PADRAIC COLUM.